

Chief, Materials Division

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Chief, Fuels and Power Branch

Evaluation of Index to FBIS Daily Reports

REF : Your Memo, same subject as above, dated 14 November 1958

1. Indexing of the FBIS apparently is aimed at increasing recoverability of open source materials. This is a desirable objective. The system has been in operation for such a short period that any conclusions concerning its desirability must be regarded as very tentative. However, preliminary investigation by M/FP analysts lead us to have reservations concerning the desirability of the project.

2. Index subject headings now in use are too broad and general to help the analyst locate specific pieces of information. While the system is relatively new, it will not be too difficult to find material under the present headings. When it has been in operation for some months, or years, the number of items filed under each heading will be so large that subheadings, and perhaps machine sorting, will become necessary. Cross referencing already is a problem. Items filed under one heading may just as logically belong under others. This suggests that the project must be considerably enlarged if it is to achieve genuine recoverability of material.

3. Some analysts question the necessity for such indexing. FBIS materials are valuable for their currency. Analysts rarely use them for historical research. The index will not obviate the necessity of daily reading of FBIS reports or the maintenance of analysts' files. The principal value of the index would appear to be in cases where an analyst is asked to write a report on a new subject on which he has kept no files. Whether it would be a usable aid, after a few years of accumulation, is open to question.

4. One thing which might increase the utility of the index would be inclusion of additional information concerning content of items indexed. At present only the reference can be obtained from the card. Decisions as to probable value of content can be reached only after inspection of the FBIS article itself.

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SUBJECT: Evaluation of Index to FBIS Daily Reports

5. Analysts report that the general headings now in use are not adequate for locating information on investments, costs, labor productivity and a number of other general subjects normally studied in the Economic Research Area.

6. Our Nuclear Energy Section suggests the following breakdown for the present general heading:

Nuclear Energy

- a. Nuclear Research and Development
- b. Nuclear Electric Power
- c. Nuclear Propulsion
- d. Foreign Aid in Nuclear Development
- e. Nuclear Weapons and Weapons Testing
- f. International Control of Nuclear Energy
- g. Production of Fissionable Materials

7. If the Index proves a genuinely successful means of recovering desired information, analysts may file less and use the index more. This will be the genuine test of the value of the index, but we will know the answer only after the program has been in operation for several months.

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